

NEWNHAM COLLEGE

US COMMITTEE

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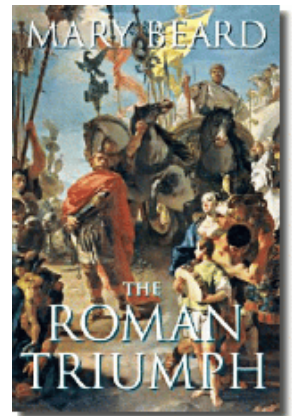
NEWNHAM PUBLISHES WORLDWIDE ALUMNAE NEWSLETTER

Later this Fall you will receive directly from Newnham a new newsletter aimed at the global alumnae community. Published by Penny Hubbard (N'79), Development Director, it will encompass the interests and news of college communities on four continents. The Newnham US Committee will be continuing to address topics of interest here in the US, from our New York City hub. We will be coordinating our future publication dates with Penny.

MARY BEARD TO BE IN NEW YORK IN LATE NOVEMBER



Mary Beard, renowned Professor of Classics, has just published her new book: 'The Roman Triumph' to considerable acclaim and will be visiting New York at the end of November on her book tour. If you have not yet received an invitation to meet her in New York, please contact Liza Torres at 212-714-4547 or lizatorres@nyc.rr.com.



OUR US TRAVEL BURSARY WINNERS EXPLORE AMERICA

Our two 2007 bursary award winners clearly gained some entirely new perspectives from their visits to America this past summer.

Helen Lomas, an English woman reading archaeology, found out that Texans are extremely friendly and not at all concerned about their 'red state' image among people across the Atlantic or East Coast Americans (no surprise to us here, of course!). Nearly overwhelmed by the southern heat, yet irrepressibly curious, Helen traveled to Austin, San Antonio, Baton Rouge and New Orleans talking to people from many walks of life along the way. She approached local cuisines (barbecue, creole, Cajun, Mexican and other local delicacies) with great gusto and tried to catch at least a glimpse of both rich and poor, historical and new, 'cool' and conservative, urban and rural. She visited a variety of local museums and cultural institutions to get a picture of how the local communities see themselves. She was energized by the liberality of Austin, bowled over by the quality of university facilities at the University of Texas and beguiled by the music and atmosphere in back street bars in both states. Newnham alumnae, Helena Verrill (N'87 Mathematics), now a professor of Mathematics in Baton Rouge and Susan Deans-Smith (N'78 Latin American Studies), now a professor of mathematics at University of Texas, hosted her most graciously on her travels. Helen has fallen in love with Texas, in spite of herself. She says she will certainly keep the option open for returning here for pleasure and/or for academic work in the future and was thrilled by her adventure in a place entirely outside her Eurocentric experience.



Helen Lomas at the Alamo

Shuyang Wang, a Chinese woman studying chemical engineering at Newnham also came to the USA for the first time. She traveled to Harvard to take a course in Economics, with a view to broadening her qualifications so she can apply for postgraduate work at American universities next year in her real love: journalism. She relished the new sights and, particularly, the sounds in Boston and New York. She attended the Boston riverside concerts and jazz programs, saw Wagner at the Metropolitan Opera in New York and enjoyed several Broadway musicals. Shuyang made an on-the-spot decision to change her course from Economics, having heard Professor Nick Halpern, whose intimate lectures in Modern and Post-modern Literature she terms ‘mesmerizing.’ She was also pleased with her second course ‘International Relations’ which she felt gave her a highly organized and comprehensive introduction to the subject. She found the continuous quizzes and essays a different approach from Cambridge’s single, major, year-end Tripos hurdle. Boston-based Newnham alumnae also very kindly hosted Shuyang. Sue Rudd (N’64 Philosophy & Economics), a telecommunications and technology consultant, challenged her with conversation as to whether the 21st century would be ‘the Chinese century’; Antonia Von Gottberg (N’88 Engineering) and her husband, both career engineers, invited her home and shared insights about their common field and Yingjie Liu (N’01 Medical Sciences), a doctor specializing in renal research, cooked Shuyang a sumptuous meal, in the process discovering that they had both attended the same high school in China.



Shuyang on Boston Common

Read Helen Lomas’ detailed diary and Shuyang’s spirited letter to the Committee posted in full on our website at Newnhaminamerica.org.

Economics at Newnham

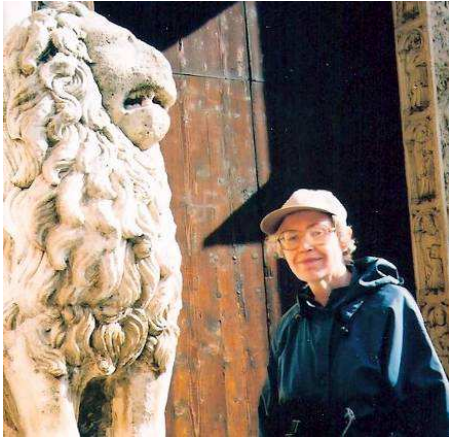
Dr. Sule Alan, a vivacious Turkish-Canadian educated in Toronto, has been Director of Studies in Economics for two years. Thirteen Newnham students read Economics and Sule expects that to rise to sixteen or eighteen soon as it is a popular and competitive subject and graduates are in universally high demand. Last year Newnham accepted 4 of 60 applicants. Economics is becoming highly technical and mathematical at Cambridge and is strongly influenced by mainstream economics from the USA. “Now we don’t discuss newspaper articles, we work on mathematical models,” Sule says. She notes that the number of women economists at the Cambridge Faculty has grown considerably and the faculty has recently hired two excellent professors from Bristol (UK) and Minnesota. “Econometrics is very strong here,” Sule says. “It’s the best in the country.” The Cambridge Faculty is in the process of beginning an exciting new collaboration with Oxford to produce analysis on household economic behavior: consumption, savings, investment, methodological issues and health economics. Sule remarks that British people are unusual among OECD countries in living with much more debt. She expects government funding to arrive shortly enabling her to hire undergraduates and post-graduates to begin doing the research. Her preference then will be to choose Newnham women to do it. She is also excited to be organizing a big conference with the initiation of the Cambridge Endowment of Research in Finance (CERF) titled ‘Household Personal Finance’ in Fall 2008. “The major banks and the people in the field from Princeton, U. Penn and such places will all come and we’ll be hosting it at Newnham.”



Sule is currently pregnant with her second child. Her husband is also at the Economics Faculty and a Fellow of Caius College. “But he feels more comfortable at Newnham than his own College. In fact, we will eat here tonight,” Sule says smiling. “Here nobody thought it was inconvenient for me to be pregnant but at other places I’m told it’s quite different.” Sule will take the statutory 18 weeks of paid maternity leave and will return to work in February. Her husband will step in and take on supervisions at Newnham while she is away. “At Newnham people appreciate everything you do. We treat our students really well too. I couldn’t have landed at a better college, though it was quite by chance.”

SPOTLIGHT ON NEWNHAM US ALUMNAE

A CLASSICAL CAREER



Rolly Phillips (N'65 Classics) lives in New York City. She says:

“The time I spent in Cambridge was essential in developing the skills necessary to pursue my lifework (the study of Greek and Latin). I did my undergraduate work at Bryn Mawr, a school with a fine tradition in the study of classics and with excellent teachers. The two years that I spent at Newnham (1965-67) were truly inspiring. While continuing to study Greek and Latin literature, I also learned much about ancient history and archeology. My distinguished teachers included Joyce Reynolds, Pat Easterling, John Crook, and Hugh Plommer. Thanks to a friend studying at Oxford, I was even able to attend Sir Ronald Syme's lectures on the first fourteen chapters of Tacitus' - Annals. What a thrill!

“I will never forget the beauty of Cambridge and the good friends I made there. I was fortunate to spend a year at Wolfson College (1974-75) while doing research at the University Library. It was a pleasure to get to know the Master, John Morrison (of Athenian trireme fame).

“My entire career has been spent teaching classics, first at the college level, more recently in a high school. I continue to be inspired not only by the subject but also by the dedication of my students. My current plan is to teach for two more years; after I retire, I hope to be able to travel to Greece and Italy when the climate is agreeable rather than in the heat of summer. I also hope to pay a visit to Newnham, which I have not seen for far too long!”

DESIGNING CONVERSATION

Silke Witt-Ehsani (N'95 Engineering) lives in Sunnyvale, CA. She writes:

“Speech and languages have been the dominant thread in my life. In 1995, I came to Cambridge for an MPhil and then a PhD in speech recognition. When I was done, I had had enough of research for research's sake but rather wanted to create things that people would use daily. I was lucky enough to find a job to build speech recognition applications.

“Almost anyone reading this probably has already called one of such systems where you're speaking to a computer instead of a person. While the technology has become powerful, only systems with a carefully laid out design, work well. And, unfortunately, there are still quite a number of awful systems out there. So, my work is focused on designing systems which people will enjoy using when making an airline reservation or checking their bank account balance.



“With my own family, language is important, too. We're teaching our two daughters three languages, German: my mother tongue; Farsi: my husband's, and English. It is my daughters, and also a house remodel here in 'sunny' Sunnyvale by San Francisco, that's keeping me and my husband busy, besides work.”

WORLDWIDE ELECTION-WATCHING



Jane Jopling (N'51 Classics) lives in New York City. She tells us:

“In 1997, after a long career at the United Nations, I was wondering what to do next. The telephone rang and it was the Electoral Reform Society in London inviting me to serve on the Election Mission in Bosnia run by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. This was the beginning of a fascinating second career as an international Elections Observer in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Africa.

“Mostly I have served as a Long Term Observer which involves spending between five and ten weeks in the country where the elections are held, working with a partner of a different nationality, and often covering a large geographic area. Our mandate is to be strictly neutral and not to interfere with the elections in any way.

“Our first task is to meet all the main players – election officials, candidates or their representatives, non-governmental organizations and local administration officials – in order to find out whether the preparations for the elections conform to the national election law and international democratic standards. We make regular reports that form the basis for the final over-all assessment. Our second task is to prepare for and supervise the international Short Term Observers who visit the polling stations on election day.

“I have now served on 29 missions in 13 countries. It has been extremely interesting - and also a great privilege. I have made many new friends, particularly young people. And it has been satisfying to feel that one is contributing to an important international endeavour.

“One of my most vivid memories is arriving with my partner – a Dutch lawyer - at a polling station in Rwanda in 2003 as the sun was rising over the hills at 5.30 a.m. It was the first election since the genocide. Long lines of people were waiting patiently for the polls to open, probably having walked several miles to get there. I thought how much more this meant to me than going on a tourist trip.”

CHELSEA BUN MEMORIES

Some of you may well remember the delights of Fitzbillies including their world famous Chelsea Buns. But do you realise that you can have these posted to you in the US? Go to their website: www.fitzbillies.co.uk and look under Chelsea Buns or under Ordering. Please note that only boxes of four buns may be ordered for overseas but you can get a year's subscription and have four sent to you every month!

Fitzbillies has been going since 1922 and since that time there have only been three owners and they have kept the recipe for Chelsea Buns a closely guarded secret. In The Daily Telegraph, 1995: "...the real thing survives. Fitzbillies, a cubby-hole of a Cambridge cake shop, was founded...in the 1920's and belongs to an era when chaps wore blazers and flannel trousers. But the epitome of a bygone age is its stickyissimus Chelsea bun....If Billy Bunter had ever made it to university, he would have gorged himself to a stupor."



NEWNHAM COLLEGE

U . S . C O M M I T T E E N E W S L E T T E R

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Also visit our website at www.newnhaminamerica.org

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